

February 26, 2015

It has come to our attention that Secretary of State, Denise Merrill has gone on record during a news conference on Wednesday, February 25, 2015 proposing the elimination of elected Registrars of Voters in Connecticut towns and cities

Merrill has stated that:

1. The November 2014 election day problems as reasons to 'professionalize' local voter offices. She has stated that trained civil service appointees should replace the elected Republican and Democratic registrars that in recent years have caused embarrassing moments of incompetence and conflict.
2. All this comes from a statewide election system that is too political, too expensive and lacks minimum standards of professionalism and accountability;
3. Where there are problems the state can do very little to hold people accountable.

In response to the above comments by Secretary Merrill we believe that the majority of the Connecticut registrars demonstrate competence and professionalism. Taking the election of registrars away from the major parties and the general electorate will not make the process any less political. It will be more political with less people having a say in the process. We believe the changes she is suggesting will add more cost to the statewide election system. Most of the towns in the state work with a bare bones elections budget. The registrars put in long hours for very little compensation. We follow standards that are set by the Connecticut General Statutes, Registrar of Voters Association of Connecticut, the Secretary of State's Office and the Towns we serve. We have to answer to the State of Connecticut, the towns we serve, Registrar of Voters Association of Connecticut and the general public.

There is a proposed Bill No. 5300 which is recommending the Regionalization and Consolidation of certain election functions. There is also talk about the Town Clerks being responsible for the entire election process. The Town Clerks and the Registrars are not in favor of this. It has come to our attention that Denise Merrill has been lobbying Mayors and First Selectmen to get them on board with another unfunded state mandate.

It is unfortunate that she has chosen to use such derogatory language and radical means to solve a handful of election day problems.

We ask for your support to preserve the present election system and hope that you recognize the hard work and dedication registrars give to their towns and cities.

Nancy Moore and Mary Labbadia

Westbrook Registrars of Voters